



State of Tennessee
Department of State
Tennessee State Library and Archives
403 Seventh Avenue North
Nashville, Tennessee 37243-0312

CLAXTON FAMILY PAPERS
1942-1954

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INTRODUCTION

The Claxton Family Papers, 1942-1954, are centered around Philander Priestley Claxton (1862-1957), educator and writer, and his wife, Mary Hannah (Johnson) Claxton (1879-1955), founder and director of the first free public library in Tennessee, at Nashville, and residents of Silver Springs, Maryland. The papers were a gift of Mrs. Claxton.

The materials in this finding aid measures .42 linear feet. There are no restrictions on the materials. Single photocopies of unpublished writings in the Claxton Family Papers may be made for purposes of scholarly research.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

The Claxton Family Papers containing approximately 100 items, span the period 1942-1954. The fragmented collection is composed of clippings, correspondence, genealogical data, a resolution, sketches, special subjects, speeches, tributes, writings and several miscellaneous items.

Clippings concern various activities of Philander Priestly Claxton (1862-1957) including the dedication of a school building, the development of a phonetic alphabet and his retirement in 1946. The correspondence is limited and of little historical value. Genealogical data may be found on the Claxton, Harding, Iredell, Johnson, Payne, Smith and Stratton families. A biographical sketch of Dr. Claxton is found in the collection. There is a resolution by the Tennessee Board of Education on the retirement of Dr. Claxton in 1946.

Special subjects include much correspondence by Mary Hannah (Johnson) Claxton on a plan for the new Tennessee State Library and Archives building and presentations of portraits of Dr. Claxton and Mrs. Claxton to the State Library and Archives in 1943 and 1952. Among the prominent Tennessee correspondents between 1943-1947 with which Mrs. Claxton promoted her ideas for a new building to house the State Library and Archives were Mrs. John Trotwood Moore, Stanley F. Horn, Prentice Cooper, Samuel Cole Williams, Jim McCord, Marshall Wingfield and James G. Stahlman.

The portrait of Dr. Claxton was done by Lloyd Embry of the Yale School of Fine Arts. A tribute and two writings by Philander P. Claxton round out the collection.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Philander Priestley Claxton

- 1862 September 28, born in Bedford County, Tennessee, the son of Joshua Calvin and Ann Elizabeth (Jones) Claxton
- 1882 Received B.A. degree from the University of Tennessee
- 1882-1883 Teacher, Goldsboro, North Carolina, Graded Schools
- 1883-1884 Superintendent of Graded Schools, Kinston, North Carolina
- 1884-1885 Graduate student at John Hopkins University
- 1885-1886 Student, Jena and Leipzig, Germany
- 1885 Married Varina Staunton Moore, daughter of William and Emily (Webb) Moore, who died in 1890
- 1886-1887 Superintendent of Graded Schools, Wilson, North Carolina
- 1887 Received M.A. degree from the University of Tennessee
- 1887 Fall, teacher, Goldsboro, North Carolina Graded Schools
- 1888-1893 Superintendent of Graded Schools, Asheville, North Carolina
- 1893-1902 Professor, State Normal and Industrial College, Greensboro, North Carolina
- 1894 Married Anne Elizabeth Porter, daughter of Joseph John and Cynthia Ann Patience (Jeffries) Porter, who died in 1905
- 1902-1911 Head, Department of Education, University of Tennessee and Summer School of the South
- 1911-1921 United States Commissioner of Education
- 1912 April 23, 1912, married Mary Hannah Johnson, daughter of George Sterling and Hannah Iredell (Spotswood) Payne Johnson, who died in 1955

1921-1923	Provost, University of Alabama
1923-1929	Superintendent of City Schools, Tulsa, Oklahoma
1930-1946	President, Austin Peay Normal School, Clarksville, Tennessee
1957	January 12, died at Knoxville, Tennessee

Author: *Effective English*, 1917 (joint author with James McGinnes)

Same Rights of Children and Youth, 1953

Professional Editor and publisher of the *North Carolina Journal of Education*
Activities:

 Editor of *Atlantic Educational Journal*

 Head of Bureau of Research and Information for Southern Education
 Board

 Director of School Improvement Leagues in the Southern States

 Chairman of Committee for Codification of the School Laws of
 Tennessee

 Executive Secretary of Conference for Education in the South

 Secretary of Southern Education Association

Source: Lewis, Charles Lee. *Philander Priestley Claxton: Crusader for
 Public Education*, 1948

CONTAINER LIST

Box 1

1. Clippings – Claxton, P.P. – Dedication of William Randolph School, Asheville, N.C., March 22, 1953
2. Clippings – Claxton, P.P. – Phonetic Alphabet
3. Clippings – Claxton, P.P. – Retirement
4. Clippings – Claxton, P.P. – Miscellaneous
5. Correspondence – Author unknown – Claxton, Mary Hannah (Johnson)
6. Correspondence – Lewis – Washington Cathedral
7. Genealogical Data – Claxton
8. Genealogical Data – Harding
9. Genealogical Data – Iredell
10. Genealogical Data – Johnson
11. Genealogical Data – Payne
12. Genealogical Data – Smith
13. Genealogical Data – Stratton
14. Itinerary – Phil P. Claxton, Jr. -- Africa, 1953
15. Memorabilia – P.P. Claxton
16. Plan for New Tennessee State Library and Archives Building – Mrs. P.P. Claxton – Clippings, correspondence, etc.
17. Presentation of Portrait of Dr. Claxton – Clippings
18. Presentation of Portrait of Dr. Claxton – Correspondence
19. Presentation of Portrait of Dr. Claxton – Program, Nov. 4, 1943
20. Presentation of Portrait of Mrs. Claxton – Correspondence, etc.
21. Resolution – Retirement of Dr. Claxton – Tenn. Board of Education, 1946
22. Sketches – Biographical – Claxton, P.P.
23. Speeches – Claxton, P.P. – “Making Tennessee a Greater State,” May 19, 1942
24. Speeches – Claxton, P.P. – “Thoughts About Country Schools,” October 4, 1942
25. Speeches – Claxton, P.P. – “Youth – Stay in School!,” September 6, 1942
26. Tributes – Claxton, P.P.
27. Writings – Claxton, P.P. – “Air Age and Education for It”
28. Writings – Claxton, P.P. – “Reforestation Demonstration at Austin Peay State College”

NAME INDEX

This is a name index of correspondence in the Claxton Family Papers, together with the dates of the letters and information regarding their contents. The figures in parentheses denote the number of letters, if more than one. The last numbers refer to the box and folder in which the material is to be found.

- Claxton, Mary Hannah (Johnson) (2) to Angus Dun, 1953, re: [handwritten but not sent] impressed with sermon; concerned when Episcopal Church overdoes the ritual; arrangements re the purchase of stone in the Washington Cathedral, 1-5
- Claxton, Mary Hannah (Johnson) to Postmaster, 1953, re: street address, 1-5
- Claxton, Mary Hannah (Johnson) to Robert Quarles, 1953, re: [handwritten but not sent] expression of admiration and respect for Quarles work with the T.H.S.; calls attention to the biography of Dr. Claxton by Dr. Charles Lewis, 1-5
- Claxton, Mary Hannah (Johnson) (5) to Dan M. Robinson, 1953-1954, re: offers to present to the Library a copy of the *Biography of Dr. P.P. Claxton*; passages cited in book as tributes to Dr. Claxton; mention of article and pictures of the "Library and Archives building" and its staff; two books soon to be published by Dr. Claxton; transmittal of a letter containing a tribute to a step mother, 1-5
- Lewis, Helen to Mary Hannah (Johnson) Claxton, 1953, re: plaque at College of William and Mary honoring Granville Smith, 1-6
- Payne, Sarah and Hoyt to Mrs. P.P. Claxton, 1952, re: family news, 1-6
- Roberts, Mrs. Everett to Dr. and Mrs. Claxton, 1953, re: tributes paid to the Claxtons by older board (Tennessee Congress of Parents and Teachers) members; misunderstanding on copies of _____ sent by Dr. Claxton for distribution by the School Education Committee, 1-6
- Washington Cathedral (2) to Mrs. P.P. Claxton, 1953, re: acknowledging gift of Memorial Stone to the Cathedral in memory of Mrs. Claxton's mother, 1-6